

**Air Quality Conformity Task Force  
Summary Meeting Notes  
March 26, 2015**

Participants:

Ted Mately – FTA  
Dick Fahey – Caltrans  
Amir Fanai – BAAQMD  
Ginger Vagenas – EPA  
Rob Sprinkle – City of Santa Rosa  
Joseph Vaughn – FHWA  
Stew Sonnenberg – FHWA  
Mallory Atkinson – MTC  
Patrick Zuroske – County of Marin

Keith Pommerenck – Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc.  
Cindy Adams – HDR  
Susan Miller – CCTA  
Cory Matsui – ICF International  
Shannon Hatcher – ICF International  
Rob Reese – Fehr & Peers  
Adam Crenshaw – MTC  
Carolyn Clevenger – MTC  
Harold Brazil – MTC

**1. Welcome and Self Introductions:** Harold Brazil (MTC) called the meeting to order at 9:33 am.

**2. PM<sub>2.5</sub> Project Conformity Interagency Consultations**

**a. Consultation to Determine Project of Air Quality Concern Status**

**i. North Civic Center Drive Improvement Project**

Patrick Zuroske (County of Marin) started his presentation on the North Civic Center Drive Improvement project by indicating that the project is confined within the County of Marin Civic Center campus which was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and is the only government complex designed and built by Wright (also the last of Wright's designs that was constructed).

Mr. Zuroske continued by stating that Civic Center Drive bisects the Civic Center campus and about 1,000 people are employed there. Mr. Zuroske also mentioned the following aspects of the North Civic Center Drive Improvement project:

- Installation of a roundabout at Civic Center Drive & Memorial Drive/Peter Behr Drive intersection, replacing four way stop
- Signal improvements at Civic Center Drive and McInnis Parkway to improve connectivity with other corridor signals
- Add buffered Class II Bicycle Lanes, connecting to a larger, regional system
- New sidewalks, including closing several gaps in existing system

Mr. Zuroske stated that some of the main objectives of the North Civic Center Drive Improvement project is to reduce auto trips by expanding sidewalks and to improve intermodal access. In reference to the project status and scheduling, Mr. Zuroske said the project construction schedule will be suspended and then restarted as to not disturb the Clapper Rail (birds) in the area.

Mr. Zuroske also indicated that the fairgrounds auditorium in the campus area host about 50 events a year and that future year (2035) average daily traffic (ADT) at locations within the project area are estimated to range between 8,400 and 16,800 ADT, therefore Mr. Zuroske did not consider the North Civic Center Drive Improvement project to be a traffic generator.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) thanked Mr. Zuroske for the presentation and did not think the North Civic Center Drive Improvement project was of air quality concern and Joseph Vaughn (FHWA), Ted Mately (FTA) and Dick Fahey (Caltrans) agreed. Mr. Zuroske also thanked Harold Brazil (MTC) for his assistance with the project-level conformity consultation process.

***Final Determination:*** With input from FTA, EPA, Caltrans and FHWA, the Task Force concluded that North Civic Center Drive Improvement project was not of air quality concern.

### **i. I-680 NB HOV Lane Extension Project**

Cindy Adams (HDR) started her presentation on the I-680 NB HOV Lane Extension project by stating that the project proposes to convert the existing high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes on segments of I-680 into express lanes. Ms. Adams went on to say that the project would construct approximately 15 directional miles of express lanes on the I-680 corridor through conversion of existing HOV lanes.

Ms. Adams referred to the map of the project area to describe that the existing HOV lanes in the SB direction of I-680 would be converted from just south of Marina Vista Avenue in Martinez to just south of Treat Boulevard in Walnut Creek, and the NB I-680 HOV lane would be converted from the I-680/SR 242 Interchange to approximately Marina Vista Avenue.

Ms. Adams also noted the following purposes and needs of the I-680 NB HOV Lane Extension project:

- Optimized use of the existing HOV lane capacity in the I-680 corridor to better meet current and future traffic demands (thereby using the facility more effectively)
- Offering non-carpool eligible drivers a reliable travel time option
- Congestion relief in the general purpose lanes during peak periods, which reduces travel time and increases reliability through the corridor

Dick Fahey (Caltrans) asked if trucks will be allowed on the express lanes and Ms. Adams responded by saying no. Mr. Fahey went on to mention the understanding that the project will not increase capacity in the mainline of I-680 (while capacity improvements will occur), but asked why the travel modeling results do not show increases in the mainline volumes (in the build alternative). Ms. Adams deferred Mr. Fahey's second question to Rob Reese (Fehr & Peers) and Mr. Reese indicated that the operational improvements would be small and that it would be difficult for drivers in the general purpose lane to experience a difference.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) asked about the estimated number of cars shifting to the express lanes (from the general purpose lanes) and Mr. Reese answered by indicating that the available capacity in the express lane will be approximately 300 cars per hour (equivalent to a small percentage of a vehicle lane, during the period when there is congestion) due to the high amount of existing HOV

demand in the corridor which limits the excess/available capacity to be sold to other drivers. Ms. Vagenas had a follow-up question asking if there was a cap on how many cars are allowed into the express lane and Mr. Reese answered by indicating that once detection devices in the express lane shows operational flow deterioration, the express lane would only allow HOV drivers (and exclude drivers paying to use the express lane).

Joseph Vaughn (FHWA) asked if the project was a 326 or 327 NEPA classification and Ms. Adams indicated that was a 326 classification.

***Final Determination:*** With input from FTA, EPA, Caltrans and FHWA, the Task Force concluded that the I-680 NB HOV Lane Extension project was not of air quality concern.

#### **b. Confirm Projects Are Exempt from PM<sub>2.5</sub> Conformity**

Harold Brazil (MTC) heard no comments from the Task Force on the **2b\_Exempt List 31215.pdf** listing one project (the Contra Costa - Rio Vista Pedestrian Connection project).

***Final Determination:*** With input from FHWA, FTA, EPA, Caltrans and MTC, the Task Force agreed that the project on the exempt list (**2b\_Exempt List 31215.pdf**) is exempt from PM<sub>2.5</sub> project level analysis.

### **3. Projects with Regional Air Quality Conformity Concerns**

#### **a. Review of the Regional Conformity Status for New TIP Projects in Amend. 15-09**

Adam Crenshaw (MTC) discussed a method for reviewing the regional conformity implications of projects being added to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) through amendments between major TIP updates. Mr. Crenshaw also indicated that this agenda item was for advisory purposes only and that the final determination of the regional air quality conformity status of these projects will be made by the FHWA, FTA and EPA as part of their review of the proposed final TIP amendment 15-09.

Ginger Vagenas (EPA) had no questions and stated that she likes this process and appreciates the opportunity to get a heads-up on making the final determination. Dick Fahey (Caltrans) agreed with Ms. Vagenas.

### **4. Consent Calendar**

#### **a. February 26, 2015 Air Quality Conformity Task Force Meeting Summary**

Harold Brazil (MTC) indicated that he wanted to close the loop with Ginger Vagenas (EPA) on the car sharing project list (**3b\_Attachment-A\_List\_of\_Car\_Sharing\_Projects\_for\_Consultation.pdf**) from the February Task Force meeting by asking her if she had any comments on these types of projects. Ms. Vagenas stated that getting the number of vehicles involved (in an individual car share project) might be enough information to avoid having the project sponsor come to a Task Force meeting and go through consultation. Joseph Vaughn (FHWA) was in favor of doing whatever was easiest to pass these type of project through the process and Harold Brazil (MTC) suggested putting small car share projects (i.e., less than 200 car included) on a separate list that

the Task Force could review and comment on. Mr. Brazil went on to say that if the Task Force considered that the car share projects on this proposed list were not of air quality concern, then the project sponsor would complete the project-level conformity process. The Task Force members agreed with this approach.

***Final Determination:*** With input from all members, the Task Force concluded that the consent calendar was approved.